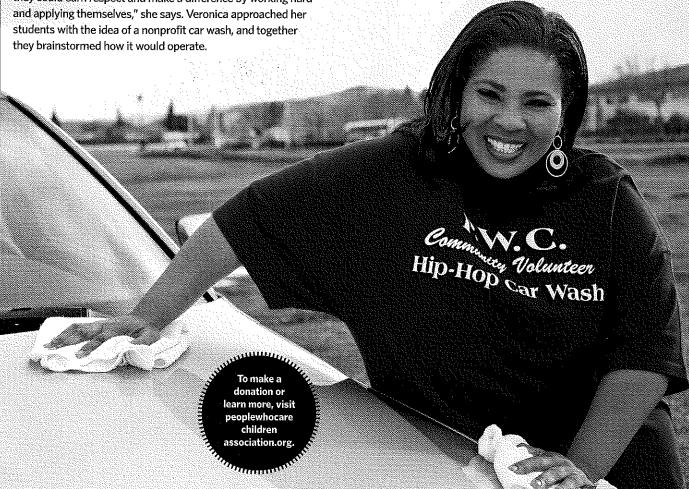
CAUSE: People Who Care Children Association's Hip-Hop Car Wash HOMETOWN: Pittsburg, CA

AS BEYONCÉ'S VOICE BLASTS FROM STEREO SPEAKERS.

teens dance and sing along while cleaning tires, vacuuming interiors and brushing out truck beds. But this is no ordinary auto detailer—these kids are part of the Hip-Hop Car Wash (HHCW), where they complete assigned community service hours on Saturdays from March through October. Back in 2002, Veronica Jean Pope was a counselor who helped at-risk tweens and teens get their lives back on track. Many needed to volunteer their time after being found guilty of various offenses, but managers were reluctant to take them on because of their records. "I wanted these kids to realize that they could earn respect and make a difference by working hard and applying themselves," she says. Veronica approached her students with the idea of a nonprofit car wash, and together

Veronica gathered seven teens in a parking lot lent to her by an auto parts store for the first car wash. For the second season, Veronica teamed up with the juvenile court, its probation department and schools to find volunteers. Almost any student who was required to perform community service could join the program after filling out an application and completing an interview. "Kids want to prove that their past mistakes don't have to define who they will be in the future," Veronica says.

HHCW charges \$5 per vehicle, though most patrons pay more to support the kids' efforts. To purchase supplies, the program relied on private donations until 2008, when it received \$22,500 in grants from local organizations. Since 2003, more than 400 volunteers have completed over 4,100 service hours. "My dream is to open a professional car wash business run and managed by kids," Veronica says. "Each time a new student joins, it's a step in that direction."



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